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On the Pronunciation of "Amusee" and Secondary Stress in General

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I remember teaching some students "Hero-Worship", by Thomas Carlyle, in the summer of 1919, soon after I graduated from Kyoto University. The full title of the book is: On Heroes, Hero-Worship and The Heroic in History. That part of the book which I explained was Lecture 111: The Hero as Poet. Dante-Shakespeare.

I happened again to read the same text at class in January of last year, 1952.

It was very interesting for me to find a number of things last year which attracted my keen attention, but which had not done so over thirty years ago.

One of the points which greatly interested me was the pronunciation of the word "amusee" in Dante. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd. p. 83, l.7

Before I speak of its pronunciation, let me quote a passage from the book where the word is found: "Dante, poor and banished, with his proud earnest nature, with his moody humours, was not a man to conciliate men. Petrarch reports of him that being at Can della Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffoons making him heartily merry; when turning to Dante, he said: 'Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and have nothing to amuse us with at all?'

Dante answered bitterly: 'No, not strange; your Highness is to recollect the Proverb, Like to Like;'—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given!"

Now, every dictionary has the word 'amuser', but not the word 'amusee.' Some unabridged dictionaries give the meaning of 'amusee,'

but its pronunciation is all.....wrong, if I may say so. The meaning is very clear. Amuser: one who amuses; one who provides diversion. 'Amusee': one who is amused. 'Amusee' can only be found in big dictionaries, and not in all, but the meaning can easily be known if one knows the meaning of such words as employee, examinee, addressee etc., etc. The Century Dictionary reads: "Amusee: The person amused. Carlyle. (Rare)." It is indeed a very rare word used by Carlyle. S. O. D. and N. E. D. have it, too. But all these dictionaries treat the vowel of the first syllable of the words 'amuse', 'amuser' and 'amusee' as the same. If so, they will be (ə'mju: z), (ə'mju: zə), (ə'mju: 'zi:) when phonetically transcribed: that is, (ə), No. 12 vowel for the first syllable of each.

We can easily tell that the vowel of the third syllable of 'amusee' must be (i:), No. 1 vowel, when we know the pronunciation of employee, examinee, addressee, etc., vowel.

The first vowel of the word 'amusee', however, is surely different from that of the other two words: not (ə), No. 12 vowel, but (æ), No. 4 vowel.

Here 12 vowels and 9 diphthongs are shown numbered:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12);
i:	i	e	æ	ɑ:	ɒ	ɔ:	u	u:	ʌ	ə:	ə
(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)			
ei	ou	ai	au	ɔi	iə	ɛə	ɔə	uə			

Before I decide the pronunciation of the vowel of the first syllable of the word in question, let me mention the evident fact that almost all the words which have stress on the third syllable, have stress also on the first; the former is called primary stress, and the latter secondary stress. Examine the following words: Japanese, conversation, preparation, employee etc., etc. They are pronounced /dʒæpə'n i:z, /kən've'seɪʃən, /prepə'reɪʃən, /em'plɔɪ'i:.

It is also interesting to notice that the vowel of the first syllable of these words are all different from that of their corresponding words: Japan, converse, prepare, employ, which are pronounced dʒə'pæn, kən've:s, pri'pə, im'plɔɪ.

In these words the first syllable is not stressed, and the vowels are (ə), No. 12, (ə), No. 12, (i), No. 2, (i), No. 2 respectively.

When the first syllable is stressed in Japanese, conversation, preparation and employee, though secondary, the vowels are (æ), No. 4, (ɔ), No. 6, (e), No. 3, (e), No. 3 respectively.

That 'amuse' and 'amuser' are pronounced ə'mju:z, ə'mju:zə, with (ə), No. 12, vowel in the first syllable is, all right, as the syllable is unstressed, but 'amusee' which must have a stress on the first syllable should not be əmju: 'zi:, because (ə), No. 12 vowel, a short and obscure vowel, is never stressed. Though no dictionaries give satisfactory pronunciation of the first syllable of 'amusee', I reached the conclusion that it must be pronounced, æmju: 'zi:, comparing the pronunciation of the letter 'a' of the first syllable of 'amusee' with the 'a' in the first syllable of the following words: Japan, Japanese; address, addressee; assign, assignee; abolish, abolition; admire, admiration; apply, application; adapt, adaptation etc., etc.

I wrote a letter to Prof. D. Jones about it, who has retired, but who was chief of the Phonetics Department, at University College, London University, where I studied English phonetics for about two years, 1930—32, and who has been kind enough to answer any questions I asked. My letter was written on February 10 last year, and I received his reply on Feb. 28. How quickly air letters fly between Japan and England. Now I am proud to say that my conclusion was approved by him.

Students of English pronunciation will find it worth while to transcribe the following words phonetically: amuse, amusee; address, addressee; employ, employee; assign, assignee; examine, examinee; consign, consignee; consult, consultee; devote, devotee; dedicate, dedicatee; distrain, distrainee; deport, deportee; devise, devisee; license, licensee; refer, referee; mortgage, mortgagee; oblige, obligee; patent, patentee; refuge, refugee; transfer, transferee; warrant, warrantee, etc., etc.

Stress

Prof. D. Jones, in 'An Outline of English Phonetics' says: "Syllables which are pronounced with a greater degree of stress than the neighbouring syllables in a word or sentence are said to be stressed or pronounced with strong stress. Syllables pronounced with a relatively small degree of stress are said to be pronounced with weak

stress.”

Here is an interesting point. Some may think that all words, without any exception, which have more than one syllable doubtlessly have strong stress. Prof. Jones says, however, in his Outline that “the majority of English words of more than one syllable have one stressed syllable and the remainder unstressed.” He does not say all the words or every word, but he does say “the majority”, which means the greater number.

As I thought it very strange, I wrote a letter to him about it, and received his answer, saying, “There is one word, the weak form of upon (əpən) which has no stress on either syllable. And there are a number of words which have two stresses.....mostly compounds like half-done.”

If one reads his Phonetic Readings in English, one will find quite a number of ‘upon’ all unstressed :

Lesson 8. calling upon the prince one day
(‘kɔ:lɪŋ əpən ðə ‘prɪns wʌn ‘deɪ)

Lesson 10. hit upon the plan
(‘hɪt əpən ðə ‘plæn)

Lesson 11. prevailed upon her husband
(pri’veɪld əpən hə: ‘hʌzbənd)

We may take it granted, however, all or almost all words of more than one syllable have strong stress on a certain syllable.

Here are some words which have two stressed syllables. They are said to have double stress, and “their stress is subject to certain rhythmic variations.”

Examples : fourteen (‘fɔ: ‘ti:n), but fourteen shillings

(‘fɔ:ti:n ‘ʃɪlɪŋz); just fourteen (‘dʒʌst fɔ: ‘ti:n)

unknown (‘ʌn ‘nəʊn), but an unknown warrior

(‘ʌnnəʊn ‘wɔ:riə)

quite unknown (‘kwait ʌn ‘nəʊn)

unsold (‘ʌn ‘səʊld), but an unsold donkey

(ən ‘ʌnsəʊld ‘dɒŋki)

It is left unsold. (ɪt s ‘left ʌn ‘səʊld.)

prepaid (‘pri: ‘peɪd), but a prepaid telegram

(ə ‘pri:peɪd ‘teli græm); It was prepaid.

(ɪt wəz pri: ‘peɪd.)

Some words are made up of a number of syllables, which have many degrees of stress. "Thus, if we use the figure 1 to denote the strongest stress, 2 to denote the second strongest stress, and so on," the stress of the English words opportunity, ability, and conversation might be marked thus :

opportunity	2	4	1	5	3
	ˌɒ	pə	ˈtjuː	nɪ	tɪ
ability	3	1	4	2	
	ə	ˈbi	li	ti	
conversation	2	3	1	4	
	ˌkɒn	və	ˈsei	ʃən	

It is useful to mark secondary stress in transcribing words which have three or more syllables preceding the principal or primary stress. Special attention must be given to the position of secondary stress in long words, where it precedes the primary stress.

A great number of words have primary stress on the third syllable, and secondary stress on the first syllable. Many examples will be given later. They are very rhythmical, as they have stresses on the first and on the third syllables. To be rhythmical is indeed very characteristic of the English language. Just recollect the words which have double stress and their rhythmical variations mentioned above.

We can expect secondary stress on the first syllable, when there is a primary one on the third syllable. One is tempted to say that all the words which have strong stress on the third syllable surely have secondary stress on the first syllable. But Prof. Jones gives a few exceptions which have no secondary stress, though they have strong stress on the third syllable.

"It is notable," says he in his 'Outline', "that special words electricity (ilek'trisiti), electrician (ilek'triʃən), electrolysis (ilek'trəlisɪs), etc., and with many speakers elasticity (ilæs'tisiti), have no perceptible secondary stress. Neither of the first two syllables can be said to have a stronger stress than the other." Examples are given below of words which have primary stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable.

Words which have primary stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable, represented as 1—3 :

abdication abnormality abolition absentee academic

accidental	accusation	acquisition	acrobatic	actuality
adaptation	addressee	adjectival	admiration	adolescence
adoration	advantageous	advocation	affability	affectation
affirmation	affrication	aggregation	agitation	agricultural
alcoholic	Alexander	Agamemnon	alienee	alphabetic
alternation	amateurish	ambiguity	ammunition	anaconda
analytic	anecdotal	animation	anniversary	annotation
antecedent	anthological	apathetic	apparition	application
apposition	apprehend	apprehension	approbation	arbitration
archaeological	archaeologist	archipelago	architectural	argumental
argumentative	aristocracy	aristocratism	apostolic	apparatus
barricade	biographic	brigadier	energetic	enigmatic
eccentricity	exclamation	expectation	fabrication	fascination
federation	fundamental	generation	graduation	habitation
hesitation	horizontal	hospitality	illustration	imitation
cafeteria	calculation	cancellation	capability	catholicity
cavalcade	celebration	cigarette	competition	complication
compensation	composition	comprehend	concentration	condensation
condescend	condescension	contribution	conversation	definition
degradation	economic	education	decoration	dedication
deferential	lamentation	legislation	machination	mathematics
Japanese	navigation	notability	observation	occupation
operation	opportunity	panorama	panoramic	preparation
reputation	reservation	resignation	scrutineer	seminar
taciturnity	tabulation	vaccination	resignation	resolution
recitation	reformation	repetition	reference	restoration
resurrect	resurrection	retribution	revolution	rhetorician
rumination	sacramental	sacrilegious	salutation	sanitation
satisfaction	satisfactory	scientific	senatorial	sensitivity
sensuality	sentimental	serenade	sexuality	similarity
simultaneous	singularity	situation	sociability	socialistic
sociological	sociologist	sonneteer	speculation	stimulation
stupefaction	sublimation	suffocation	suitability	superhuman
supernatural	superstition	superstitious	supervision	supplemental
sympathetic	syndication	systematic	tangibility	taxability
telegraphic	tenability	termination	terminology	topographic

ultimatum	unanimity	undergraduate	understand	undertake
universal	university	valuation	variation	vegetarian
veneration	ventilation	vindication	violation	violin
virtuosity	visitation	vivisection	volubility	volunteer
wagonette	warrantee	whereupon	whimsicality	whosoever

Now what happens with secondary stress when the fourth or fifth or sixth syllable has primary stress, there being two, three, four or five syllables preceding the stressed syllable?

Among them some words have secondary stress on the first or on the second syllable. A great number of examples will be given, and more can be, if wanted, as I have checked many while reading through Prof. Jones's Pronouncing Dictionary and classified long words.

Prof. Jones says in his Outline of English Phonetics; "English word-stress cannot be learnt by means of rules. In most cases there is no rule as to the incidence of the stress, and when rules can be formulated at all, they are generally subject to numerous exceptions. It is therefore necessary for the foreign student to learn the stress of every word individually."

This is quite true. However, there seems to be a certain rule concerning the position of secondary stress—a rule which I may say I have discovered.

Just look at some of them:

classification (,klæsɪfɪ'keɪʃən), centralization (,sentərəlɪ'zeɪʃən), examination (ɪg,zæmɪ'neɪʃən) and pronunciation (prə,nɑnsɪ'eɪʃən), and compare them with classify ('klæsi faɪ), centralize ('sentərəlaɪz), examine (ɪg,zæmɪn) and pronounce (prə'naʊns).

Thus nouns compared with their verb forms, the position of their secondary stress can be told. We can say that its position can be fixed from their corresponding words.

I wrote about it to Prof. Jones on December 23, 1951, and received his answer on January 15, 1952, saying, "You are correct about the secondary stressing of words with three weak syllables preceding the strong stress."

Examples of words which have primary stress on the fourth, fifth or sixth syllable are given below:

Notes: 1.....4 indicates secondary stress on the first syllable and

a primary one on the fourth syllable.

1.....5 indicates secondary stress on the first syllable and a primary one on the fifth syllable.

2.....4: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the fourth syllable

2.....5: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the fifth syllable

2.....6: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the sixth syllable

1.....4

alimentation	amicability	amplification	anglicization
anthropological	applicability	argumentation	aristocratic
aristotelian	atomization	authorization	autobiographer
autotypography	calcification	canalization	canonization
carbonization	caricaturist	centralization	certification
characteristic	cinematography	circumlocution	civilization
clarification	classification	codification	colonization
dedicatee	fundamentality	gratification	harmonization
humanization	hypnotization	idolization	jollification
jubilation	jurisdiction	justification	localization
magnification	manageability	mathematician	mobilization
modification	mystification	nasalization	neutralization
notification	organization	ornamentation	practicability
representation	reputability	scandalization	sentimentality
stabilization	tantalization	temporization	vaporization
velarization	versification	navigability	labialization

1.....5

artificiality	attitudinarian	characterization	apopsiopsis
generalization	reconciliation	regularization	volatilization

2.....5

abbreviation	abomination	academician	acceleration
accentuation	acceptability	accessibility	acclimatation
accommodation	accountability	accumulation	adaptability
administration	admissibility	adulteration	advisability
affiliation	alination	alleviation	alliteration
amalgamation	ambassadorial	amenability	annihilation

annunciation	antagonistic	anticipation	apocalyptic
apologetic	appendicitis	appreciation	approachability
appropriation	approximation	articulation	assassination
asseveration	association	attainability	attainability
attractability	authentication	availability	attenuation
bacteriological	calumniation	capitulation	coincidental
collaboration	combustibility	commerciality	confederation
congratulation	consideration	defensibility	deliberation
pronunciation	effectuality	elaboration	ejaculation
elimination	enumeration	enunciation	exaggeration
examination	excitability	familiarity	felicitation
gesticulation	gravitation	habilitation	hallucination
humiliation	idealization	illumination	imagination
immutability	immovability	impersonality	impossibility
legitimation	matriculation	negotiability	negotiation
originality	participation	peculiarity	reliability
remuneration	respectability	responsibility	

2.....5

beatification	capitalization	democratization	identification
electrification	immobilization	exemplification	impenetrability
imperishability	impracticability	incalculability	incomparability
insuperability	intelligibility	intensification	macadamization
materialization	personification	solidification	syllabification
tuberculization	unalterability		

2.....6

americanization anathematization incomprehensibility irreconcilability

Based on the lecture delivered at Nagoya University
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Japan on June 7, 1952.